

methods for antimicrobial susceptibility testing. A study group of the WHO is preparing information revising and supplementing previous recommendations concerning standard reference methods as a basis for comparative evaluation of other methods. The National Committee for Clinical Laboratory Standards is examining recommended standard procedures. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration may reexamine techniques to be recommended in antibiotic disc package inserts. A new manual published by the American Society for Microbiology emphasizes standardization of procedures. Of the several well-documented, controlled methods developed by different investigators, the method of Bauer and Kirby has achieved the widest application and standardization. Any modifications or revisions in testing procedures, such as the use of a simplified inoculum procedure with an agar-overlay, should be standardized carefully and compared with a control, standard method, such as that of Bauer and Kirby, before being introduced into clinical laboratory practice.

LAURI D. THRUPP, M.D.

REFERENCES

- Petersdorf RG, Sherris JC: Methods and significance of in vitro testing of bacterial sensitivity to drugs. *Amer J Med* 39:766-779, 1965
- Anderson TG: Testing of susceptibility to antimicrobial agents and assay of antimicrobial agents in body fluids, chap 37, In Blair JE, Lennette EH, Truant JP (Eds): *Manual of Clinical Microbiology*, Bethesda, Md, American Society for Microbiology, 1970
- Bauer AW, Kirby WMM, Sherris JC, et al: Antibiotic susceptibility testing by a standardized single disk method. *Amer J Clin Pathol* 45:493-496, 1966
- Barry AL, Garcia F, Thrupp LD: An improved single-disk method for testing the antibiotic susceptibility of rapidly-growing pathogens. *Amer J Clin Pathol* 53:149-158, 1970

Carbon Monoxide as Community Air Pollutant

The national Clean Air Act and California's Mulford-Carrel Act require the setting of standards for air quality. Carbon monoxide (CO) is among the materials which will be controlled. The Air Quality Criteria for Carbon Monoxide, recently published by the National Air Pollution Control Administration (NAPCA), reviews the health effects of carbon monoxide in detail. Increases in carbon monoxide hemoglobin (COHb) to 2 or 2.5 percent follow exposures of 12 to 17 mg per cubic meter (10-15 parts per million) for 8 hours or more. Such concentrations of CO are

not rare in traffic centers; in downtown Los Angeles, the hourly average concentration exceeded 10 ppm for at least one hour on 24 days out of 29 in December 1968 and on 26 days out of 31 in January 1969. In La Habra, California, the comparable numbers were 27 days out of 28 in December and 19 out of 31 in January.

COHb increases of less than 3 percent are associated with diminished abilities to judge short intervals of time, and impairment of some visual functions under conditions of dim light. With 5 percent COHb, impaired performance on arithmetic and other psychological tests has been reported. There is some evidence that suggests an association between increased fatality rates with myocardial infarction and weekly average CO concentrations of 8 to 14 ppm.

The NAPCA suggests "It is reasonable and prudent to conclude that, when promulgating air quality standards, consideration should be given to requirements for margins of safety that would take into account possible effects on health that might occur below the lowest of the above levels"—that is, 10 ppm. The attainment of such standards will require stringent controls on motor vehicles, but this can be achieved.

RODNEY R. BEARD, M.D.

REFERENCES

- National Air Pollution Control Administration—Air Quality Criteria for Carbon Monoxide. Publ 62, Washington DC, 1970
- California Air Resources Board: California Air Quality Data. Sept 1969, Sacramento
- Bear RR, Grandstaff N: Effects of chronic exposure to low levels of carbon monoxide on human health, behavior and performance. To be published in the Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences
- California Air Resources Board: Control of Vehicle Emissions after 1974. Report of Technical Advisory Committee, Nov 1969, Sacramento

DDT Out—Organophosphates Also Dangerous

By administrative order, the Director of the California Department of Agriculture is phasing out the use of DDT in California's agricultural industry and eliminating its availability on the home-garden market. By the end of 1970 virtually all uses will be prohibited.

Practicing physicians should be clearly aware of the possible public health consequences of this